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WADDELL'S HISTORY OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VA.

AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER.

We are indebted to Mr. Waddell for the following account of the manners and customs of the Valley:

HOW THE FIRST SETTLERS OF THE VALLEY LIVED.

It is strange that the date of the first settlement of the Valley of Virginia, by white people, is not certainly known. The date generally given is the year 1732; but a few people located in the lower Valley, near the Potomac, and others, of German race or descent, on the Shenandoah river, near Elkton, some years earlier. The latter came from Pennsylvania, about 1726, and all that is known of them is derived from papers resurrected and published in the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*. In 1732, William Beverley sought to obtain a patent for a tract of land embracing the lands occupied by the people referred to, and they addressed a protest to the General Court. From the fact that the titles to various tracts of land in that neighborhood are traceable to the first German settlers, it appears that they were not disturbed in their possession. Mr. Beverley afterwards obtained from the government a patent for an immense domain in the heart of the present county of Augusta.

The German people, none of whom probably could speak English, were few in number, and located off the track of the Scotch-Irish immigration which set in about the year 1732. At that time the upper part of the Valley was entirely uninhabited, so that the white people who came did not dispossess or intrude upon any aboriginal occupants. The country abounded in game—bears, deer, wolves, and some elks and buffaloes; and for some years after the arrival of white people, Indians, on hunting or war expeditions, often traversed the country.

The first settlers made their way through the wilderness on foot or horseback, from across the Potomac river. Probably a few cattle were driven along. Sheep and hogs were afterwards introduced. The dog followed his master, of course. Very few articles of household furniture could be brought. There was no road, and no wheeled vehicle could be employed. A few indispensable articles and seed corn were all that could be transported.

As successive parties arrived and located near forests, their first care was to provide shelter for their heads. In the meanwhile, they were exposed to the inclemency of the weather. For a year or more they must have subsisted on wild meat, without bread or any substitute for it.

In the absence of any report or tradition to the contrary, it is inferred that the early settlers enjoyed good health, notwithstanding their exposure and hardships. There was no malaria in the region, and the people

were not swept off by pestilence as were the settlers on the sea coasts. Nor did the people suffer from want of food, such as it was. While the colonists in lower Virginia wasted their time in idleness, or in futile search for gold, the sturdy people of the Valley set to work at once to cultivate the soil, and soon had "bread enough and to spare."

John Lewis had a mill near Staunton, in 1751, but when it was built we do not know. Until it began to grind corn, hominy was doubtless the staple dish of the people, after the crops were matured.

The country was rapidly settled. Wave after wave of people came from Pennsylvania; few or none from east of the Blue Ridge for many years. By the year 1742, the population of the region now embraced in the counties of Augusta, Rockbridge, Rockingham and Bath, was about 2,500. There is no record of the birth of the first child in the settlements, nor of the first death. There were many infants, however, before the year 1740.

The public buildings of every community are generally superior in all respects to private houses, and we may infer what was the character of the dwellings of early settlers from the description of the first courthouse of Augusta county. The house was built in 1745, by Mr. Beverley, for the use of the county, and is thus described in a presentment of the Grand Jury, on May 21, 1748: It was "thirty-eight feet, three inches long, and eighteen feet, three inches wide in the clear, built with logs hewed on both sides, not layed close, some of the cracks between the logs quite open, four or five inches wide and four or five feet long, and some stopped with chunks and clay, but not quite close; two small holes cut for windows, but no glass nor shutters to them; the inside not furnished, nor fitting for his Majesty's Judicatory to sit."

Nothing is said about floor or chimney, and we are left to infer that the floor was mother earth, and that the room was not warmed at all in cold weather. The first meeting houses and dwellings were no doubt the same sort of structures—without floors, and without glass in "the holes cut for windows." The County Jail, described by the Grand Jury at the same time, had a "chymney that was formerly built in a very poor manner, now part of it is down," says the jury, "so that there is an open way to the roof which a man might easily break with his foot and hands."

A new courthouse, built of stone, was finished in 1755, and stood 'till 1836; and the stone church, on the macadamized turnpike, eight miles north of Staunton, which is still standing and used, was erected in the same year, or a little before.

There were no roads in the settlement worth speaking of for a number of years, and they were scarcely needed in the absence of wagons and carts. The first attempts at roads were feeble beginnings. It was only sought to cut away trees and brush, to enable riders and pack-horses to pass along. Until December, 1745, the public business of the

Valley was transacted at Orange C. H., and we find from the records of that county, that on November 27, 1742, the "inhabitants of Borden's tract" petitioned for a road to Wood's Gap (now called Jarman's), in the Blue Ridge, and the court ordered that the road be "*cleared from James Young's through Timber Grove.*"

The most unique road-petition, however, is that of Peter Scholl and others, presented to Orange Court, February 23, 1744. They lived on Smith's creek, now in Rockingham county, and petitioned the court, setting forth that they were required to work on a road thirty miles from their plantations, and praying for a road nearer home. Apparently, Peter and his neighbors had no use for a road near them, except to render it unnecessary for them to go so far to labor. The court was considerate enough to grant the petition.

The first mention of a road extending through the Valley, is on February 24, 1745, when James Patton and John Buchanan reported to Orange Court that they had viewed the way from the Frederick county line, "through that part of the county called Augusta, according to the order made last March," and the court ordered "that the said way be established a public road." It would seem from the court record that nothing was done except to view the route, but it is fair to presume that in due time the inhabitants were required to "clear the track."

There being no roads or vehicles, it was impossible to bring many articles of household furniture from abroad; and the men, who might have made many things, were too busy opening up their farms to manufacture anything that could be dispensed with. Consequently, during the first fifteen years or more, the dwellings were hardly better furnished than the wigwams of the Indians.

From the inventories of the estates of persons who died, after the court of Augusta county was opened, in 1745, we learn, to some extent, how the dwellings were equipped. The inventories are very minute, embracing many articles of such small value as to be omitted now-a-days. The values are stated in pounds, shillings and pence, Virginia currency; but we give them here in dollars and cents.

The first inventory on record, is that of Joseph Martin's estate—among other property, he owned a mare, saddle and bridle appraised at \$12.50, "bed and bed-clothes and cross-cut saw," worth \$10.83, and two pocket knives and a glass bottle put at twenty-five cents.

For many years there were no leather beds; but pillows, bolsters and bed-ticking were appraised, the last named being doubtless filled with straw and chaff, after the crops of wheat and rye came in.

The next decedent was Abraham Strickler, whose estate was appraised April 19, 1746. He was a rich man for the time and country, the total valuation being \$722. He left twenty cows and calves appraised at \$3.33 $\frac{1}{3}$ each; seven cattle three years old, worth \$3.80 each; 11 hogs, \$1.16 $\frac{2}{3}$ each; 2 stills and implements, \$10.00; sixty gallons of liquor,

forty-two cents per gallon; four cart wheels with tire, \$13.33½; wash tub, fifty cents; twenty-five deer skins, \$11.50; sixty-six pounds of old brass, \$5.50; best bed and furniture, \$6.66⅔; rifle and smooth-bore guns and bullet moulds, \$11.66⅔; "all Abraham's wearing clothes," \$6.66⅔.

The inventory embraces plows, hoes, axes, hay forks, scythes, sickles, augers, turner's tools, and implements for rope making. As far as appears, the deceased owned no table, chairs, table knives and forks, spoons, glass or china ware, andirons, shovel and tongs, and cooking utensils.

The mention of "cart wheels with tire" is the first intimation of a wheel vehicle in the settlement. This decedent and another are the only persons who left stills. There is nothing to show that malt liquors were made or drank. No loom is mentioned in any inventory of the period, although coarse cloth was no doubt woven at an early day; but the looms were probably regarded as fixtures, and not a part of the personal estate, many persons had wool cords and spinning weels. There were no pictures, musical instruments, nor cups and saucers. If anybody had owned and left a Jew's harp it would have been appraised and inventoried. Nearly every person owned horses, cattle and Bibles. In 1746, four horses were appraised at \$33.33½, an average of \$8.33⅓, and in the same year "a great Bible" was appraised at \$2.91. The Bible was probably old and worn, and the first cost was no doubt much more, approximating the value of a horse.

We might infer that tables, chairs, &c., were left for the use of the families of decedents, and therefore were not inventoried and appraised; but as other articles of household furniture were appraised, and no inventory of the period embraces the former, we must conclude that they were not in existence.

John Dobein owned twelve sheep valued at 83 cents each. The difficulty of protecting sheep from wolves made them cheap. Robert Crockett owned two work oxen worth \$18.33¼, and a chest of drawers worth \$8.33⅓, but no table or chair. The wonder is how the chest of drawers got here. It certainly was not brought from abroad, and probably it was made by John Preston, the old ship carpenter, who, according to tradition, made furniture for himself and others. A table elaborately carved by him was long preserved by his decedents as a specimen of his skill and industry. But it is strange he did not turn out many common tables and chairs, which are now considered indispensable by civilized people.

George Hays, a house-keeper, who died in 1747, had twelve spoons, the lot valued at 25 cents. The spoons were pewter, of course. Many persons had spoon-moulds, and kept pewter on hand for making spoons and plates.

Abraham Drake left an unusual quantity of wearing apparel. He had

two coats, five vests, three pair of breeches, two pair of drawers, a hat, and twelve shirts.

Joseph Watson, who died in 1747, had dishes and spoons worth 50 cents, and knives and forks worth 58 cents. These are the first knives and forks we find mentioned.

Samuel Cunningham had half a dozen knives and forks, five pair of scissors, seven clasp knives, nineteen spoons, and four pewter dishes.

Next we have the inventory of the wearing apparel of two spinsters, Frances and Janet Hutchinson, who died in 1748. Their wardrobe consisted of eight petticoats, six gowns, two jackets, two short cloaks, four old fine shifts, fourteen old coarse shifts, two silk handkerchiefs, three hoods, shoes and stockings, and "old clothes and trumpetry" valued at 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents. They also had five coarse sheets, five blankets, a rug bolster and bedtick, basin, porrigers and wooden ware.

Robert Wilson, the owner of many cattle and some farming implements, left a pair of boots and a pair of shoes, each pair valued at 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents. He had bed clothes appraised at \$10.00.

At last we find a man, Ludorick Freedly, who owned a wagon, which was valued at \$5.00. This was in 1749, seventeen years after the settlement in the county.

Patrick Cook was a high liver for the time. He left, in 1749, a stool, seven chairs, a wig, two table cloths, a table (the first on record), three beds and bed clothes, a looking-glass (the first) worth 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents, wooden trenchers and dishes, and one knife and two forks worth 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents.

The first slave owner appears in 1749. James Coburn owned a negro man appraised at \$66.66 $\frac{2}{3}$, and a negro woman worth \$110.00. He also had pewter dishes, plates and spoons, an "iron-shod wagon" worth \$23.33 $\frac{1}{3}$, and bed, bedding and bolster worth \$4.16 $\frac{2}{3}$. He was a rich man, however, his personal estate amounting to \$1,122.

Matthew Skeen owned a feather bed and bed clothes worth \$5.50; and Alick Evans, besides three sheep, owned thirty-one books.

Martin Kauffman was of a literary turn, but probably kept books for sale. His library consisted of four Bibles, two Testaments, eight hymn and psalm books, ten small books called "Golden Apples," and sundry other small books. He had also a "house clock," valued at \$16.66 $\frac{2}{3}$, ten stocks of bees, a wagon, much live stock, tools and implements, but very little household furniture. His personal estate was appraised at \$777.90.

The first rector of Augusta Parish was the Rev. John Hindman. He came from the north of Virginia, as a Presbyterian evangelist, and located first at Rockfish, across the Blue Ridge. The Rev. John Craig alludes to him snappishly in his diary, under date of April 5, 1747, thus: "This day John Hindman attend —, having turned his coat and now appearing in the quality of a Church of England parson." Without Episcopal ordination, he was inducted as rector, April 6, 1747, on the

recommendation of the Governor of the Colony. He died in 1749, leaving the following estate: Nine horses, a book of Common Prayer, fifteen volumes of sermons, two minister's gowns, five wigs, and two shirts and a wallet valued at fifty cents.

It is to be hoped that the poor gentleman had at least one suit of clothes, in which very likely he was buried. The horses probably indicated the rector's savings out of his meagre salary of £50, or \$166.66⅔ a year. There were no public funds in which spare cash could be invested, nor banks in which it could be deposited for safe keeping, a horse or two could, in emergency, be sent through a gap in the Blue Ridge, to lower Virginia, and converted into money. But the Parish was a large one, and the rector probably needed more than one horse to go his rounds. One of his successors, after the settlements were extended, had to go as far as Pittsburg which was included in the Parish. Did the rector, however, have no saddle and bridle, hat or boots?

John Moffett, father of Colonel George Moffett, a very prominent man in his day, and whose descendants are numerous, left home in 1742 or thereabout, to go to North Carolina, and was never heard of afterwards. In 1749 his death at the hands of Indians being presumed, his personal estate was appraised. He had many horses, two beds and bed clothes worth \$5.00, six knives and forks, and a Bible, and two small books worth \$3.00.

We may add that John Moffett's widow married John Trimble, who was killed by Indians in 1764, when his son James and others were captured and carried off. Trimble's step-son George Moffett, raised a party and pursuing the Indians on their retreat, overtook them and rescued the captives. Ten years afterwards, James Trimble participated in the battle of Point Pleasant. During the Revolutionary war he commanded a company and had Jacob Warrick as his lieutenant. Soon after the war, he, with many other Augusta people, emigrated to Kentucky. His oldest son, Allen Trimble, became governor of Ohio, and another son a member of the United States Senate.

In 1749, Peter Kinder had two chairs.

Samuel Scott owned four slaves valued at \$283.33⅓; spoons, noggins, trenchers, &c., \$1.66⅔; two pair of breeches \$1.66⅔; no table or chairs.

James Shields, who died in 1750, had, among other things, a knife and fork valued at twenty one cents.

Matthew Sharpe owned a wagon, twenty-one sheep, nine bee hives, &c.

Michael Rinhart, left, among other things, "a pair of old schlippers," worth 8½ cents.

After 1751, wagons were quite numerous. One man who died in that year, had a nursery of apple trees, valued, however, at only \$2.66⅔.

Colonel James Patton, the nabob of the settlement, was killed by Indians in 1755, but his personal estate was not appraised 'till 1758. In the list we find the first mention of silver spoons, but only three. The

other articles, in addition to many bonds, are twelve chairs, two tables, a looking glass, three cups and saucers, the best bed and furniture (\$16.66 $\frac{2}{3}$) and four holland shirts.

Soon after the court of Augusta county was opened, in 1745, Robert McClanahan obtained license to keep an ordinary. His log cabin hostelry was across the street from the courthouse. We may imagine the scene in the dining room on a court day. The dinner table was spread in the big room, and was composed of several split logs put together, and the guests sat on benches constructed in like manner. The food was brought to the table in pewter or wooden platters, and consisted probably of beef, certainly of pork and venison, and possibly of bear meat; with cabbage, potatoes and turnips, one or all. If Colonel Lewis's mill was then grinding, corn dodgers were supplied for bread, otherwise there was only hominy; no knives and forks were furnished, but each gent whipped out his jack knife and helped himself as best he could, fingers being freely used. The charge for the meal, as fixed by the court, was 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents, coffee was not known, but liquors of several kinds were at hand, and at surprisingly low prices, according to the established rates—rum \$1.50 per gallon, whiskey \$1.00 per gallon, and claret 83 $\frac{1}{3}$ cents per quart, whatever else the people did without, they managed by some means to obtain liquors; such is the native depravity of man! But as far as we know, intemperance was not prevalent.

It was not 'till after the Revolution that coffee was commonly used; when tea was first introduced, the people were puzzled as to its preparation. An old lady, however, stated that she drank the broth and her husband ate the greens.

It must be borne in mind that the purchasing power of money in 1740-50, was much greater than at present, so that an article then appraised at \$1.00, would now be valued at probably \$2.00 or more. There was, of course, little money in the Valley during the period referred to, and its value was in the inverse ratio of its quantity; the less there was, the more valuable it was esteemed. The people could have had nothing to sell abroad for money, except deer and elk skins, and horses and cattle which could be driven on foot to market.

JOS. A. WADDELL.

Staunton, October, 1898.